

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed project at up to 450 sites and locations along 95,000-miles of coastlines and inland waterways.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

October 6, 2006 to October 18, 2006

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)

The Department of Environmental Quality is reviewing a PEIS for Implementation of the U.S. Coast Guard Nationwide Identification System Project.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT:

U.S. Department of the Homeland Security/United States Coast Guard

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) provides an assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed implementation of the Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) project by the USCG. The proposed implementation of the NAIS project would involve installing receivers, transmitters, transceivers, repeaters, and other equipment on towers or other structures at up to 450 sites and locations along 95,000-miles of coastlines and inland waterways, as well as the use of selected remote platforms such as satellites, offshore oil and gas platforms, and data buoys. The proposed implementation of the NAIS project is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) level I investment and USCG major systems acquisition and would be expected to be fully implemented and operational by 2014. The Automatic Identification System (AIS) is an international standard for ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, and shore-to-ship communication of information, including vessel identity, position, speed, course, destination, and other data of critical interest for navigational safety and maritime security. The proposed implementation of the NAIS project would provide the USCG with the capability to receive and distribute information from shipboard AIS equipment and transmit information to AIS-equipped vessels to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness. The project would provide detection and identification of vessels carrying AIS equipment approaching or operating in the maritime domain where little or no vessel tracking currently exists. There are four alternatives evaluated in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document (e.g., No Action, All New Tower Builds, Combination of Collocation and New Tower Builds, and All Collocations).

HOW A DECISION IS MADE:

DEQ's Office of Environmental Impact Review coordinates the Commonwealth's response to environmental documents for proposed state and federal projects. DEQ distributes the documents to appropriate state agencies, planning districts and localities for their review and comment. Upon consideration of all comments, DEQ prepares a single state response.

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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